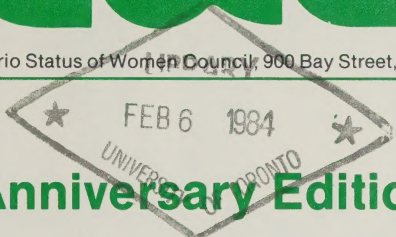




# status

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Our Best Wishes for  
A Happy and Successful  
New Year

## Tenth Anniversary Edition

The Council celebrated its 10th anniversary this past fall and in this issue we take the opportunity to bring our readers an update on some happenings of particular interest.

In addition to special Council projects, we believe significant progress was made on several fronts in 1983, including some issues the Council has advocated for some time now. Along with other women's groups we are encouraged by what we believe is an increasing public awareness of the critical need to provide women with the equality they deserve but have been denied for so long.

We take heart from the progress we see and we begin 1984 with optimism, determined to continue to work together to bring about a better deal for women in all aspects of life in Ontario.

We begin our second decade very much aware of the many challenges still facing us all in such crucial areas as equality of pay and opportunity, family law, pension reform, child care, pornography, domestic violence and others.

We appreciate receiving your views on these and other subjects.

## Forum on Equal Value

The Ontario Status of Women Council will be hosting a public forum on equal pay for work of equal value on February 3 and 4 in Toronto.

The forum will be held in the Carlyle Room of the Chelsea Inn in Toronto and will begin at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, February 3. The session on Saturday, February 4, is scheduled to run from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Representatives from women's groups, business, labour and government are being invited to speak in a series of panel discussions. These discussions will focus on both the philosophical aspects of the issue and the practical implementation of the concept. Speakers will also concentrate on the causes and effects of the wage gap and the various methods which can be used to combat it.

Attendance at the forum is free of charge and refreshments will be served.

PLEASE COME AND PARTICIPATE!



## COUNCIL MEMBERS



### Sitting (left to right)

JOHN ADAMS is a senior consultant with Willhurst Communications Ltd. in Toronto.

KAY TOYE of Burlington is a volunteer with a seniors residence in Oakville and a board member of the Halton Alcohol and Drug Addiction program.

GWEN BOWER-BINNS of Ottawa is the past president of the Provincial Council of Women.

SALLY BARNES from Kingston was appointed Council President in September 1982. She was formerly a journalist and press secretary to Premier Davis for seven years.

BARBARA STONE is a legal secretary in St. Catharines and involved in church and community activities.

SANDRA MANZIG is a teaching master and Modern Language Specialist at St. Clair College in Windsor.

CETA RAMKHALAWANSINGH is a program consultant for the City of Toronto in the Equal Opportunity Division.

### Standing (left to right)

ELEANOR RYAN of Ottawa is a financial controller in External Affairs and a member of the OFL.

ANNABELLE LOGAN is a nurse, active volunteer and past president of the Board of Directors of Childreach.

SHEILA WARD, V-P, is a member of the Toronto YWCA board and involved in their annual Women of Distinction Awards dinner.

KAY HOWLAND from Dunrobin is a partner in a lambing operation with her husband.

GEORGINA CALDER is a statistician with the Children's Aid Society of Kenora. She is also a member of the Business & Professional Women's Club in that region.

### Absent:

BILL KELLOWAY of Ottawa is a professor and an advisor at the Canadian Police College.

MARY LOU FOX RADULOVICH of Manitoulin Island is the Director of the Ojibway Cultural Foundation.

## CONGRATULATIONS DEPARTMENT

The Ontario Status of Women Council congratulates its first chairman, LAURA SABIA, a very deserving recipient of the Person's Award, presented recently in Ottawa by the Governor General. Next year's awards ceremony should be especially impressive with JEANNE SAUVE, the country's first woman Governor General, presiding.



## Pension Reform

The Ontario Status of Women Council in its brief to the Parliamentary Task Force on Pension Reform recommended a Child-Rearing Pension in recognition that the raising of children is of benefit to all in society.

Council noted that today a pension may be the family asset of greatest value, and thus recommended that the Ontario Family Law Reform Act be amended to provide for pension splitting similar to that available in some other provinces.

Under Council's proposal to extend the Canada Pension Plan to homemakers caring for children up to the age of 12, the CPP contribution would be provided by the wage-earning spouse. Low-income families or families eligible to receive family benefits would have contributions subsidized.

Council stressed that the first priority of pension reform must be to provide greater income to poor, elderly single people (most of whom are women). The Council recommended an increase in the Guaranteed Income Supplement to the single low-income cutoff level, or at least to a fair proportion of an elderly couple's guaranteed income. Council called on the provincial government to take the initiative through its GAINS program if the federal government is unwilling to increase the GIS.

Council noted that the tasks of child-rearing and housework still fall largely on women, and for those who need to work for pay, part-time work is often the answer. Seventy-two percent of part-time jobs are held by women and most of these pay low wages and do not allow participation in pension plans. Since almost one-quarter of all working women work on a part-time basis, Council recommended that part-time employees be entitled to participate (on a pro-rated basis) in pension plans where such plans are available to full-time employees.

## A Minister and Directorate for Women

The appointment of Deputy Premier ROBERT WELCH as Minister Responsible for Women's Issues was welcomed by the Ontario Status of Women Council.

Mr. Welch has a long history of involvement with women's concerns. In 1973, during his term as Provincial Secretary for Social Development, he introduced a Green Paper on equal opportunities for women and established the Council. Later, as Attorney-General, he demonstrated his long-standing interest in women's concerns through his work on family law reform.

The Ontario Status of Women Council had lobbied for a long time for a Cabinet Minister whose full-time responsibility would be women's issues. The Council is pleased that at last we have a senior minister appointed, and in practical terms a person whose own political future depends on his ability to bring about benefits for the women of Ontario.

Since his appointment, Mr. Welch has met with representatives of various women's groups and senior women within the Ontario public service. He has indicated he will continue to seek advice and counsel from many sources.

One week after his appointment, Mr. Welch set in process a new mechanism whereby all submissions to Cabinet must be analysed for their impact on women. In practice, this requires policy advisors and other public servants to analyse all proposals and programs, which should bring the recognition that women often get short-changed. Hopefully, this will be a step forward for women.

The Ontario Status of Women Council congratulates GLENNA CARR on her appointment as Executive Director of the Ontario Women's Directorate and wishes her and her staff much success.

## Family Law Reform

The Ontario Status of Women Council presented its brief to the Attorney General and now awaits Government response to the promised review of the five year old Family Law Reform Act.

In preparing its brief, Council consulted with women's groups and lawyers specializing in family law. In making its recommendations, the Council was mindful of the sensitivity and complexity of family law issues, acknowledging that the process of law reform in an area filled with moral and emotional overtones is an extremely difficult one.

The brief called for the adoption of a deferred community of property regime combined with co-ownership of the matrimonial home and some judicial discretion with respect to business assets and debts. This regime accepts the reality of spouses contributing in different but equal ways to the welfare of the family, entitling each of them to share equally in the gains (and losses) resulting from their joint efforts.

In regard to judicial discretion, the Council believes it is unfair to leave so much discretion to judges who for a variety of reasons, backgrounds and attitudes, have been quite varied in their judgements. The law should contain firmer ground rules on which judges can make their decisions.

The Council recommended that the matrimonial home, as the most important family asset, should be jointly owned, and regardless of title, no spouse should be disinherited from his or her home.

The Council also recommended that mediation should be made an alternative to litigation for the resolution of family disputes relating to property, support, custody and access. Council made this recommendation out of concern that many couples, following marriage breakdown, find themselves caught in an adversarial process that heightens tension within the family.

The brief called for a public education program to ensure that citizens are more aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Family Law Reform Act.

## One More Step . . .

In the 1983 provincial budget, the Ontario Government announced removal of its veto to the child-rearing drop-out provision amendment to the Canada Pension Plan. The Council believes it was a victory not only for the women of Ontario but for women across Canada.

Recently, the Minister of Labour introduced amendments to the Employment Standards Act which will provide further protection for domestic workers, unpaid adoption leave, improved maternity benefits and job protection for female employees returning from pregnancy leave.

In addition, the Government also introduced the "composite test". This test is intended to close the loopholes in the present equal pay law, broadening the scope of comparison between similar jobs performed by female and male employees and alleviating the most obvious cases of inequity.

Public hearings on these proposed amendments are being held on January 9, 10 and 11, 1984, and the Ontario Status of Women Council will be appearing before the Legislative Committee conducting the hearings.

## Council Publications

Copies of Council's briefs and annual reports are available free of charge from the Council office.

## We're Moving . . .

As of January 20th we will be moving our Council office to the following address:

900 Bay Street  
Mowat Block, 5th floor  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1L2

